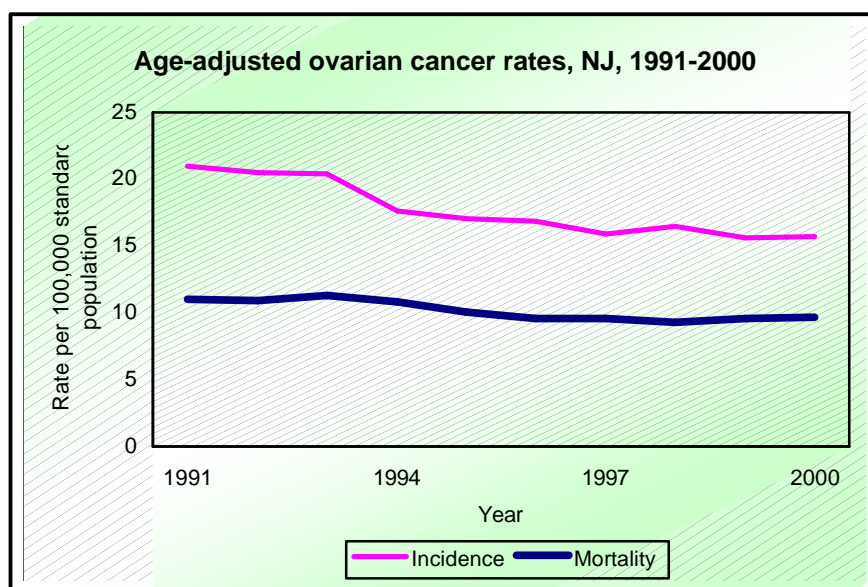


## September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

- Each year in New Jersey, over 700 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and nearly 500 die from this disease.



- The ovarian cancer incidence rate has decreased over 25% during the 1990s. The decline was experienced by nearly every age group, except 40-44 which had a slight increase. The greatest decrease was among those aged 80-84.
- Incidence rates are decreasing for both white and black women. In 2000, the age-adjusted ovarian cancer incidence rate per 100,000 standard population was 16.5 for whites and 10.7 for blacks.
- The ovarian cancer mortality rate also decreased during the 1990s, though not as greatly as the incidence rate.

- The mortality rate is decreasing twice as fast for black women as for white women (23% vs. 11% from 1991-2000). In 2000, the age-adjusted ovarian cancer mortality rate per 100,000 standard population was 9.9 for whites and 8.8 for blacks.
- Most cases of ovarian cancer are not explained by any known risk factors, however older age, never bearing children, a high number of lifetime menstrual periods, use of fertility drugs, family history of ovarian or breast cancer, estrogen replacement therapy (without progesterone), and hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer are associated with increased incidence.
- A healthy diet, birth control pills, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and tubal ligation and hysterectomy have been associated with decreased ovarian cancer risk.
- Ovarian cancer is difficult to detect because its symptoms are vague (abdominal swelling, unusual vaginal bleeding, pelvic pressure, back or leg pain, and problems such as gas, bloating, long-term stomach pain, or indigestion) and early ovarian tumors are difficult to find via physical examination. Because of the difficulty in detection, most ovarian cancers are not detected at an early stage. Diagnostic tests such as ultrasound and CA125 (a tumor marker) blood test may be used on high-risk women.
- Treatment for ovarian cancer may include surgery, chemotherapy, and/or radiation therapy.

For more information about ovarian cancer from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services:  
[www.state.nj.us/health/cancer](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cancer)

For more information about Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month: [www.ovarian.org](http://www.ovarian.org)

Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Cancer Epidemiology Services:  
[NJ State Cancer Registry](#), unpublished 1991- 2000 incidence data

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, [Center for Health Statistics](#):  
New Jersey 1991-2000 Death Certificate Data Files, unpublished data

American Cancer Society:  
[Overview: Ovarian Cancer](#)  
[Cancer Facts And Figures 2003](#)

[National Ovarian Cancer Coalition](#)



James E. McGreevey, Governor  
Clifton R. Lacy, MD, Commissioner

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Center for Health Statistics  
P.O. Box 360  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360